

New Holland Mennonite Church

January 7, 2024 • Volume 69, No. 1

Fellowship: 8:30 am • Sunday School: 9 am • Worship: 10:00 am

Baptism of the Lord



How does a
weary world
rejoice? *We trust our
belovedness*

About the Logo: “Two people—one radiating joy & the other wading into weariness—hold the world together.”

We began our series by acknowledging our weariness and we conclude with trusting our belovedness; ultimately, our joy is rooted in the fact that we belong to God. In the story of Jesus’ baptism, the heavens part open and the voice of God wraps Jesus in joy and loving care. Some translations of Luke 3:22 read, “in you, I find happiness and delight.” Therefore, we are also the source of God’s joy. When we trust our belovedness, we live and give fully—we are compelled to treat all of creation with tenderness and care. When we trust our belovedness, we have endless reasons to rejoice.

Gathering & Praising God

Summoned by the God Who Made Us (VT 1) Jenn Esbenshade
Call to Worship Sue Martin
Prayer for Illumination
Helpless and Hungry (VT 268)

Hearing God’s Voice

Offering
Scripture: Luke 3:21-22
Conversation with Children Dawn Kaczor
Sermon: “We Trust Our Belovedness”
Pastor Dawn Ranck-Hower

Responding

Prayer of Confession Pastor Dawn Ranck-Hower
Words of Forgiveness
Your Love Is Amazing (VT 96)
Commissioning of Leadership Team
Your Love Is Amazing (chorus)
Communion Pastor Dawn Ranck-Hower
“The Bravest Thing We Can Do” by Rev. Sarah Speed
Sharing and Announcements
Congregational Prayer Pastor Dawn Ranck-Hower

Sending

God Be the Love (VT 43)
Benediction Sue Martin

Liturgy by Rev. Sarah Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

Coffee: Ray Hurst; **Greeters:** Brenda Martin Hurst & Ray Hurst

Sound: Kai Esbenshade

Offering: Wade Esbenshade & Ruth Douglas Miller; **Close:** Jim Bailey

What We Value

**With Jesus as our center, we commit to
including all people,
strengthening our relationships (and)
practicing peace and justice.**

(adopted February 2023)

Beloved

by Laura Wright Pittman • inspired by Luke 3:21-22
Digital painting and collage

Luke's account of Jesus' baptism is brief and vague. He was baptized among "all the people" (Luke 3:21) by an unnamed baptizer, and until he prays, the scene is rather unremarkable. During his prayer, however, an iconic scene unfolds with the heavens opening, the Holy Spirit descending in the form of a dove, and a voice booming from heaven.

As I considered how I might visually respond to this text, it was difficult to imagine this event with a beginner's mind. I've seen lots of imagery of Jesus in the water with clouds breaking open and a dove descending, or Jesus bursting out of water into a beam of light. These images are powerful, but I wasn't sure if creating a similar image would be helpful, or if I'd be offering insight into the text that hadn't already been visually explored.

I began to meditate on what was unspoken and implied in Luke's account, and one moment that stuck out in my imagination was the moment Jesus was underwater. How did Jesus feel when he held his breath and descended into the river?

This image offers a snapshot of Jesus right before he steps into his calling, on the threshold of spectacular affirmation. He is completely suspended, embraced, and upheld by the waters of baptism. The water's surface is choppy. The future is unknown and precarious. His path is a lonely and formidable one, eventually leading to his suffering and death.

Despite what is to come, Jesus reaches toward the surface. Two fish are drawn to the light of his halo, foreshadowing his companionship with fishers and his miraculous feeding of the five thousand. All of creation is leaning into his call.

This is what trusting your belovedness feels like—muscles and bones relieved of gravity's burden, serenity, weightlessness, oneness with creation, and the warmth of God's love permeating every cell of your body and every corner of your soul.

Pastor: Dawn Ranck-Hower; dawn.ranck@verizon.net; 1/215/237-1485
Leadership Team: Wade Esbenschade, Dawn Kaczor, Ruth Douglas Miller
18 Western Ave., New Holland, PA 17557 • 717/354-0602
www.NewHollandMC.org • Hearing Aids Available

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

January 11: Darryl Jackson

NEXT SUNDAY: January 14

Coffee: Pat Thomas; **Greeter:** Francy Bailey; **Close:** Mike Bortzel

Worship Leader: Wanda Gonzalez-Bortzel

Song Leader: Kelsey Means; **Sermon:** Dawn Ranck-Hower

Congregational Prayer: Ruth Douglas Miller

Children: Dawn Ranck-Hower; **Sound:** Bryan Hower

Offering: Francy Bailey & Sue Martin

UPCOMING EVENTS

All events are at New Holland Mennonite Church unless otherwise indicated

January 10: Men's Dinner, 5:30/6 p.m. Garden Spot Village

January 12: Book Club: *Americanah*, 7 p.m. Esbenschade Farn

January 17: Women's Dinner, 5:30/6 p.m. GSV

February 11: Annual Congregational Meeting, 9 a.m.

December 24

Attendance: 47 (3 on zoom) • **Offering:** \$1,550.00

December 31

Attendance: 36 (6 on zoom) • **Offering:** \$910.00

Church News

Afghans for Union Community Care: This year we donated 276 baby afghans & hats, 24 baby quilts, and 160 crocheted bibs to Union Community Care. (Last year's numbers: 198 afghans, 49 quilts, 155 bibs). Thanks to everyone who contributed!

First Men's Dinner: 6 p.m. at Garden Spot Village, on **Wednesday, January 10** and every second Wednesday of the month through 2024. Room is reserved from 5:30-8:00, so feel free to come anytime after 5:30. Note: Food is available to purchase only until 6:30 p.m.

Land Acknowledgment: We acknowledge, with humility, that the land where we sit and stand today is land that was home to the Susquehannock, Shawnee, and Lenape people. Let us be aware that we occupy their homeland, and that their presence is imbued in this land.

Bulletin insert January 7, 2024

Book Club: Friday, January 12, 7 p.m. Esbenshade Farm. Jenn will lead a discussion about *Americanah*, by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. Please RSVP: <https://forms.gle/qsrXJ5jEa3A2sNf38>

Community News

Financial Training: Discover personal financial training with which help people develop strong habits for personal finances. This 7-week series includes one-hour online sessions facilitated by Everence Stewardship Consultants. To register, go to everence.com/national to find the session that works best for you. **(300 vouchers are available at a special \$19 cost, instead of \$99. So sign up today!)**

Peacemaking Initiatives in Palestine/Israel: You are invited to hear Jonathan Kuttab, Palestinian lawyer and peace activist, speak on **Sunday, January 14, 2 p.m.**, Akron Mennonite Church, 1131 Diamond St, Akron, PA. This event is sponsored by Pilgrims Mennonite Church and Akron Mennonite Church.

Invitation to Common Read: ACC's Peace & Justice Committee will host its first Common Read with a focus on Elias Chacour's *Blood Brothers*. You are invited to read the book and join conversation **every other Tuesday beginning January 16 at 7:00 pm**. The group will meet on a video call to discuss the assigned chapters. "As a child, Elias Chacour lived in a small Palestinian village in Galilee. When tens of thousands of Palestinians were killed and nearly one million forced into refugee camps in 1948, Elias began a long struggle with how to respond. In *Blood Brothers*, he blends his riveting life story with historical research to reveal a little-known side of the Arab-Israeli conflict, exploring whether bitter enemies can ever be reconciled. This book offers hope and insight to help each of us learn to live at peace in a world of tension and terror." Ruth and Keith moderating. Sign up: atlanticcoastconference.net/common-read.